

# **Minutes of the Housing Partnership/ Fair Housing Committee Public Meeting**

**August 18, 2010 9:00 a.m.  
First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall**

## **Attendance**

**Present:** Walter Wolnik (WW), Claude Tellier (CT) (Recording Secretary), Nancy Gregg (NG), Chair, Flo Stern (FS), Ellen Kosmer (EK);

**Absent:** Chris Hoffmann (CH)

**Guests:** Nate Malloy (NM) (staff); Alisa Brewer (AB) (liaison) [9:40-11:00]; Hwei-Ling Greeney (H-LG) & Reikka Simula (RS) (visitors)

## **Called to order**

9:15am

## **Minutes**

Minutes from the July 8, 2010 meeting were reviewed and approved unanimously (EK/WW).

## **New Business**

The committee discussed eligible projects that could receive up to \$450,000 from left-over FY 2009 CDBG funds:

**Olympia Drive:** In the absence of Erica Gees, architect from Ford Gillen Architects who was to present energy conservation strategies for the project, NM presented the case for qualifying Olympia Drive as a CDBG-eligible “energy-efficient project”. It has now been established that Olympia Dr. is in its own target area outside of a downtown or village center, but qualifies for CDBG funds a green, energy-efficient project—a requirement for new construction. To qualify as an energy-efficient development, the housing was shown to meet or exceed the new Energy Code. The Town is requesting that up to \$200,000 of CDBG funds be allocated to Olympia Drive for “pre-development costs” (architecture, engineering, and traffic and environmental impact studies).

NM is asking for support from HP/FH for the project application to be presented at the CDBG public hearing on August 24, 2010 for FY2009 funds.

The committee voted and **approved unanimously** (moved CT/EK) that the Housing Partnership/Fair Housing Committee supports the Town’s application for CDBG funding for Olympia Drive up to \$200,000 in predevelopment costs.

**Hawthorne Property:** NM summarizes the case—the Town purchased the property with CPA funds for affordable housing, open space, and recreation. The property is approximately seven acres including one old farm house, two barns and wetlands (1/3

of property). A preliminary study describes the cost of renovating the house (including lead paint and asbestos shingle remediation) and preparing it for one to two affordable units as significantly greater per square foot than the demolition and rebuilding alternative. NM estimates that renovation with mediation would cost \$250-\$300 per sq. ft. versus \$175 per square foot for new construction following demolition.

The town is proposing to clear the property for new affordable units. The cost of demolition (down to “bare dirt”, and remediating lead and asbestos) is estimated at \$85,000 and could be done to meet the required deadline for use of FY2009 CDBG funds.

The current house appears to be historically significant—possibly timber frame. EK spoke strongly in favor of rehabbing the Hawthorne property because of its visual value to the streetscape and the importance of preserving one of the few existing examples of 19th century vernacular farmhouse architecture.

The Historic Commission is reviewing the case and could impose a one-year demolition delay.

The committee voted and **approved by a vote of 3-2** (opposition states concerns for historic value and protection of town character) (moved: CT/WW) to support the project application [i.e., for demolition costs] up to \$85,000 for FY2009 CDBG funds if the Historic Commission does not object.

### **Other Business**

**Homeless Shelter for fall:** RS reports on progress to have a Homeless Shelter for the next fall-winter season (Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>-April 31<sup>st</sup> 2011). Committee and staff are collaborating, and progress is being made to have space at the Baptist Church be in compliance with the regulations for a shelter.

**Housing Trust:** We agree to study the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Guidebook Chapters 1 to 3 for discussion at the October meeting. CT will write and distribute his notes from Connie Kruger’s July presentation. WW asks about the status of various Town Plans, including the Community Development, Community Preservation and Housing Production Plans mentioned in Chapter 3 as being helpful to the establishment of a Trust.

**40B Referendum:** In face of the current political pressure to repeal the Chapter 40B affordable housing statute, the committee **voted unanimously** (FS/NG) that “HP/FH supports the continuation of 40B to facilitate the development of affordable housing”.

**Amherst Affordable Housing Associates:** The organization, created by the Amherst Housing Authority to hold the project on Main Street is looking for a volunteer from HP/FH to sit on its Board. That board meets once a year. WW volunteers. NG is a member at large on that board.

**Zoning Subcommittee:** WW reports that the Planning Board's Zoning Subcommittee, after a couple of months of looking at an alternative approach to a needed replacement for the "Phased Growth" zoning bylaw, has returned to the "point system" approach.

**Material Distributed at Meeting (Available upon request with the Planning Department, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Town Hall)**

- Agenda
- Meeting Minutes from August 19, 2010

**Next meeting**

September 16<sup>th</sup>, First Floor Mtg Room, 9.00 a.m.

**Adjournment**

Voted unanimously to adjourn at 11:05. FS/CT

Submitted by: CT